February 13, 2006- Rep. Rahall Delivers Comments At Congressional Forum On Mine Safety And Health

Rep. Rahall Delivers Comments At Congressional

Forum On Mine Safety And Health

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) delivered the following remarks at the Congressional Forum on Mine Safety and Health with Miners and Miners' Families today:

Good morning and a special welcome to those of you who traveled through perhaps some treacherous conditions to be with us today in the Nation's Capitol. That in of itself is testimony to your dedication to the cause of improving coal mine safety.

I would also like to thank my colleagues for attending, especially George Miller, the Ranking Democratic Member on the Education and Workforce Committee, for sponsoring this forum.

Coal mining and the safety of our miners are matters that have received too little notice by the Federal government for far too long. It is shameful that it has taken the recent loss of 19 miners - 16 of them from my State, four from my Congressional District - to finally bring the overdue attention of the Administration to this issue.

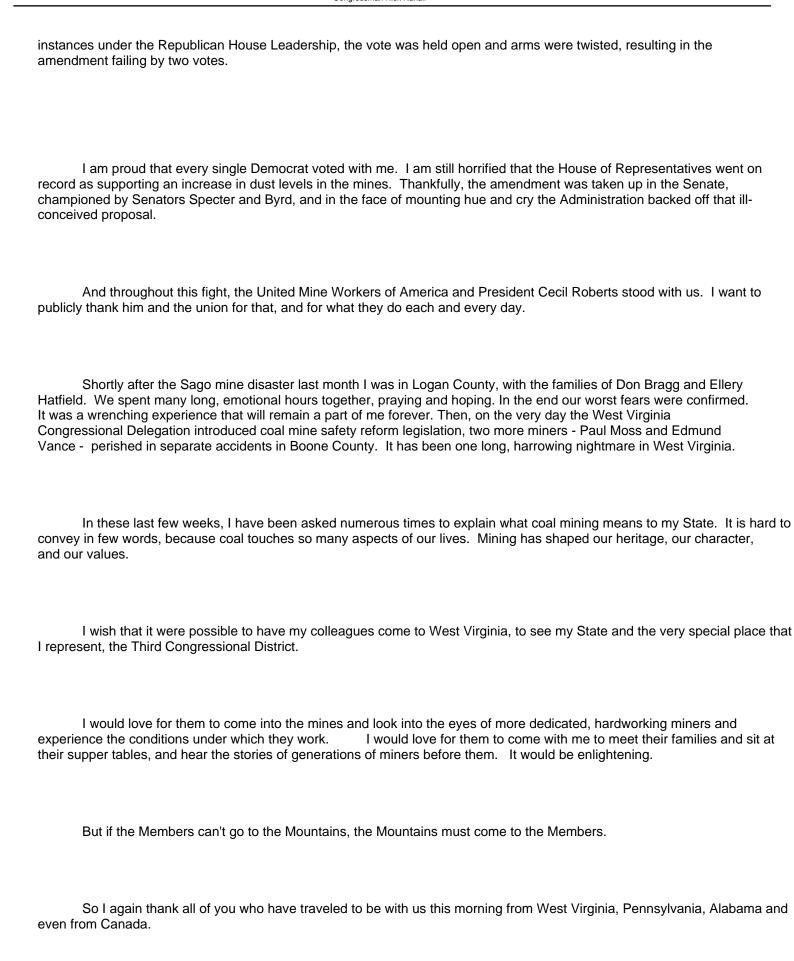
In the wake of these fatalities it is tragic that the Administration still is dragging its feet on essential mine safety reforms. It is, however, a sad and recurring reality that action to address the plight of the coal miner has historically come about almost solely as a result of tragedy.

For those of you who do not know me, I grew up in the coalfields of southern West Virginia. I have lived among miners all my life. I have stood on the picket lines when armed, helmeted mercenaries were called in to intimidate miners legally expressing their grievances. And during my tenure in the Congress I have been a consistent champion for coal miner health and safety issues.

Few things have so deeply touched me than my battle on behalf of those who suffer from the crippling effects of black lung disease. Legislation I sponsored several years ago became a roadmap for the Clinton Administration's issuance of new regulations aimed at giving these victims a better chance at obtaining justified benefits.

And it was not too long ago that I stood on the floor of the House of Representatives with an amendment to halt the Bush Administration's attempt to issue a rule that would have resulted in a four-fold increase in respirable dust in underground coal mines. At the end of the 15-minute vote I had won that amendment. But as has been the case in many

http://www.rahall.house.gov Powered by Joomla! Generated: 1 June, 2006, 18:58



http://www.rahall.house.gov Powered by Joomla! Generated: 1 June, 2006, 18:58

very much and would be very proud of you today. I know I am.

To those who just recently lost their loved ones, I know you are hurting, but I am certain that your husbands loved you

Let your voices be heard.
From this room in the Nation's Capitol, let it be heard.
Let it ring out like a Siren's Call, out among the coalfields of our country, in the boardrooms of the corporations, from coast-to-coast of this great Nation of ours, let it be heard. Hear us now, those in the Administration, Hear us now, those in the Congress.
Listen to the voice of the people, those who know this issue best, as they speak from the heart, and from knowledge, to improve the lot of true patriots, our coal miners.
Thank you.

http://www.rahall.house.gov Powered by Joomla! Generated: 1 June, 2006, 18:58